

More Success with Sales **by Paul McKenna**

Do you enjoy making people happy? Do you make life easier for people? Do you help people improve their lifestyle? Do you like seeing others resolving their problems? You do? Congratulations, you possess the foundational attitudes that can make you an excellent sales person.

We once asked a group of luxury car salesmen what they most liked about their work. One after another they waxed lyrical about the merits of the products, its speed, its engine, its workmanship, the wide range of extras. They knew everything there was to know about every model in the range. And then Tom stood up. He took a deep breath and with an enormous smile on his face said "It's the people - I get such a buzz from making people happy!" Tom knew as much about the product as his colleagues, but he had something that gave him the edge, he knew what was at the heart of selling. Incidentally, guess who was the top performer in his company? That's right...Tom!

What is special about Tom? Tom's colleagues are in the business of selling the product. They believe in their product but its not enough. Tom believes in the product too, but his main focus is on making his customer happy.

Many sales people (and even sales managers!) have confused taking an order with making a sale. It's easy to make a sale to someone who has already decided to buy. The art of selling is guiding another person through the process of finding out what they really want, creating a path to attain that desire and guiding them to make the decision to follow that path.

Selling is a purposive form of communication and everyone is in the business of selling something. If we didn't need to sell ourselves, everyone would find his or her life partners in a dating agency. A good sales person is someone who assists others to make the most appropriate decisions in a specific situation. Not only are we all sales people, but also we all sell the same thing. We sell feelings. Every decision we make will be kicked into action by a feeling. Every purchase we make is activated by our desire to get basic feelings of security, freedom, happiness, contentment, etc.

The key to successful sales lies in discovering what feelings your customers are seeking in buying a product and then assist them in fulfilling those feelings through your product or service. Successful selling is not about exercising your personal power, smiling and talking smoothly. Sure, you can persuade people to buy your product or service, but if it doesn't create their desired feelings in them, they wake up one day with buyer's remorse. And guess what? Even if you have honestly and impeccably 'sold' the right product for them you haven't done your job fully.

Here are a few key ideas to becoming more successful in the art of selling...

Build Strong Relationships

80 percent of sales are based upon liking the sales person. People like people who they perceive to be like them. Establishing rapport with your customer is a basic building block to creating a long-lasting and mutually beneficial relationship.

Rapport means being in sympathy or harmony with. As you begin to notice how your customer moves through the world and build rapport by pacing the tone of their voice, their body language and gestures, you are minimising the differences and emphasising the similarities between you. This will establish a perceived likeness and the customer will feel at ease.

Consider the goals or the desires of the person as though they are your own goal

Ask your customers what is it that they want. Find out what is really important to them. It is more difficult for someone to disagree with you if you can demonstrate that you have his or her interests in mind.

Ghandi won his non-violent battle with the British because he was flexible enough to see the situation from their point of view. He realised that not only was their intention to hold on to their Empire but that they wanted to protect their Indian subjects. When Ghandi managed to convince the British that the needs of the Indian subjects could and would be met via his proposals it was a lot easier to reach a solution. Stephen Covey in his "Seven Habits of Effective People" says 'seek first to understand and then be understood.' Tom's colleagues weren't interested in understanding their customers; they wanted the customer to understand the value of their product. Tom, on the other hand, made the needs of his clients the main focus, which is why he was so much more successful in the long run.

Sharpen Up Your Senses

Listen to what people are actually saying and clarify their meaning. Respond specifically using the word choices that your customer uses. Resist putting your own interpretations on what is said. Everyone holds a different meaning for language and if you are in the business of influencing people, you must use the language THEY use to describe their desires rather than paraphrase with words of your own. It has been said that human beings "leak the truth from every pore." Human beings give off conscious and unconscious signals all the time. When you begin to notice the small movements in facial muscles, the direction of the eyes, skin colour changes and breathing rates by paying close attention to other people, you will build your ability to respond more appropriately to conscious and unconscious messages. Most importantly, you will be able to tell if what you are doing is working and if it isn't then do something else.

Be Flexible

In Cybernetics, the law of requisite variety states that in any system, all else being equal, the individual with the widest range of responses can control the system. Whoever is most flexible, and has the widest range of responses controls the situation.

If you want to influence someone, look to your own behaviour

Research shows that only 7 percent of our meaning is conveyed through the words we use. A massive 93 percent of communication is non-verbal through body language and voice tone. It's not what you say, but HOW you say it.

When you are sending out one message via your words and another via your body language the customer is going to ignore your words and take the meaning from the non-verbal communication. In order to become more skilled get your multiple messages under control and make sure that all aspects of your communication say the same thing.

There is no absolute and definitive one size fits all, process for "successful selling" - after all you are selling to human beings, not baked beans, but there are pointers along the way to more successful selling: -

- Finding nice ways to build rapport with different clients
- Finding out what your customers really want - what feelings they are looking for
- Continually developing your ability to handle a wider range of responses
- Begin to treat other people's needs and wants as if they were your own

Think again: **Do you enjoy making people happy? Do you make life easier for people? Do you help people improve their lifestyle? Do you like seeing others resolving their problems? You do?**

Congratulations...